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TAJIKISTAN

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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO AVERT FOOD CRISIS IN TAJIKISTAN

Shahrityus District, October 31, 2008. As part of United States Government efforts to avert a food crisis in Tajikistan, Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson participated in the distribution of wheat seed here to members of disadvantaged communities and members of the Water User Associations. During the distribution, Ambassador Jacobson said, "the United States Government is very much aware of the effect that the global food crisis is having in Tajikistan, as well as other parts of the developing world. The wheat seed program is part of a \$6 million special assistance package offered by the United States to help Tajik families through the coming winter and ensure a better harvest next fall. Our program also includes cash and food for the most vulnerable households in Tajikistan."

USAID Supports a Seed Supply Program to Mitigate Food Insecurity in Tajikistan

Global food prices have increased more than forty percent from 2007 as a result of adverse weather, increased demand, and increasing costs of agricultural inputs. The additional cost of food is more acutely felt by the poor as a greater percentage of their budget must go towards purchasing food. Increases in the cost of major food staples of maize, rice, and wheat have recently sparked riots in several countries around the world.

To help mitigate the food crisis, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Water Users Association Support Program (WUASP) implemented by Winrock International, is providing six hundred tons of top-quality wheat seed for distribution to farmers in Tajikistan. The increase in wheat production through the additional seed will greatly assist in alleviating shortages of wheat, particularly for the most vulnerable, and thereby improve food insecurity in Tajikistan.

The Water Users Association Support Program also helps Tajik farmers improve irrigation systems and water management that also contributes to increased crop production. The farmers and communities involved in this program have experienced a substantial increase in their economic well-being through project activities, and by their own efforts to utilize the training and technology they have acquired.

The WUASP is one of the many assistance projects implemented by USAID on behalf of the American people in Tajikistan. Since 1993 the American people through USAID have provided more than \$300 million in assistance programs that support economic growth, democratic institutions, health care, and education systems of Tajikistan.

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